

through Medicare, to prevent that hypertension causing a heart attack which otherwise would put you into the hospital—very expensive—or cause a stroke—very expensive. Now that can be preventative.

There is \$7 billion in improved physician payments which physicians deserve; \$25 billion in rural health improvements in order that our rural communities will be able to access the appropriate health care they need today; \$26 billion in State Medicaid relief and affordable health care through tax deductible health savings accounts. All of it is a first step, a start.

I wish to comment this has been accomplished in a bipartisan way. We need to continue working in a bipartisan way. I look forward to doing that. I look forward to working with both sides of the aisle to the benefit of America's seniors.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL LARD). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. STEVENS pertaining to the introduction of S. 2280 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I have a couple very brief statements to make; the first on the issue surrounding jobs, and the second on the issue of asbestos. Both of these issues are issues that we, on the floor of the Senate, have a real responsibility to address. I have specific suggestions as to how we might address both of these issues in the coming days and coming weeks.

JOB TRAINING

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, first, in terms of jobs and job training, this morning the President of the United States unveiled a proposal to double the number of Americans who would receive job training assistance from the Federal Government. The initiative reflects the President's commitment to help people get the training they need, they require to find new jobs and better jobs. It builds upon an earlier proposal by the President of the United States announced in his State of the Union Message in January to help community colleges train an additional 100,000 workers for industries that are creating jobs in this country, to bring these job training programs to people who need the education and the job training, and to use our community colleges, expanding on the tremendous resource they provide today.

As we all know, our economy is changing and changing fast. It is being transformed in so many ways. That is a great source of strength and adaptability, that flexibility to changing times both here in this country and around the world. Yet, at the same time, as we increasingly realize, this transformation, this adaptability, this flexibility in our economy—these changes in our economy—almost by definition result in a dislocation, a loss of jobs for some individual workers. That leaves us with a responsibility that we on the floor of the Senate must address, and we have addressed in part, but we have not fully addressed.

We must make a strong commitment to effective—I underscore that word "effective"—job training programs that will help American workers adapt to that changing economy, to give them the tools they need to fill those new jobs that are being created.

The Department of Labor, as we all know by now, announced last Friday that more than a half a million new jobs have thus far been created this year. That is good news. It is great news. We need to keep working to ensure that more jobs are created, and that workers are being trained to fill those new jobs that are being created. We need to respond now as well as in the months ahead.

We hear about the Workforce Investment Act, the WIA. We hear about it, and we hear that it is being obstructed, that we have acted in the Senate, that the House has acted, but it cannot make it to conference. Yes, this is one of a whole series of bills that we have worked on, that we have passed, and then we have this obstruction in getting to conference. Although my colleagues know, others who are listening may not: No matter how much work you do on the Senate floor, and the House floor, and you pass things, until you get it to conference and work through it and bring it back to the floor, it does not become law of the land. That is exactly where we are with this Workforce Investment Act.

People ask, what is the Workforce Investment Act? Right now, our Federal

Government sends about \$4 billion—actually, more than \$4 billion—a year to State governments and local governments through this Workforce Investment Act. However, last year, only 200,000 people—200,000 workers—received job training through these programs.

President Bush, as he outlined today, has set a goal to double the number of workers receiving job training through Workforce Investment Act programs. So we have fewer than 200,000 workers, and that would mean doubling it to 400,000 workers a year. He set out—and appropriately, I believe, and as reflected in our underlying bill—he wants to do this by maximizing the Federal dollars that are sent, by maximizing those Federal dollars directly to the workers themselves—getting it right down to the workers themselves, No. 1, and, No. 2, eliminating the bureaucracy, the overlap, the duplication, the overhead cost, where we know there are going to be additional savings. So we have a problem, but it is a problem that we know can be fixed.

Right now, the Federal Government spends \$23 billion a year on more than 30 job training programs, spread across nine different Departments and agencies.

The result of that is a confusing patchwork of programs that result in overlapping, inefficiencies, confusion, and chaos. This overlap of all of these programs results in bureaucratic red tape. You put all that together, it means fewer of the dollars that are allocated, that are spent actually get down to that individual worker or person who is to receive job training. I applaud the President for his focus on creating jobs, on training workers for jobs today and the future, but we in the Congress have to step up as well.

The fact is the Workforce Investment Act has expired. It needs to be reauthorized. Mr. ENZI, the Senator from Wyoming, who is chairman of the Subcommittee on Employment Safety and Training of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, has done a tremendous job in working with his colleagues in a bipartisan way to develop a bill. That bill has passed in the Senate. A companion bill has passed in the House. But because of objections from the other side of the aisle, we have been unable to go to conference, to pull those two bills together on this important JOBS legislation.

I do hope that the other side of the aisle will reconsider their objections to go to conference so that we indeed can get important legislation to the President and get workers back to work, get people back to work who may have lost their jobs with the appropriate training. That is our responsibility. The President has laid out the vision, laid out the agenda. We have written the legislation. We passed the legislation. Now it is time to marry that legislation with the House in conference.

Thus I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to reconsider and